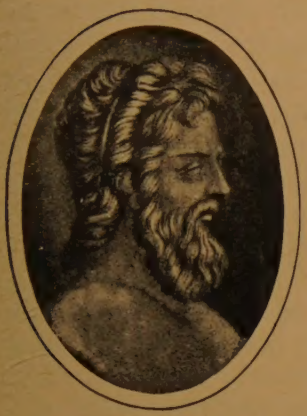
GRECIAN MASTERPIECES

By LORADO TAFT
Sculptor and Author



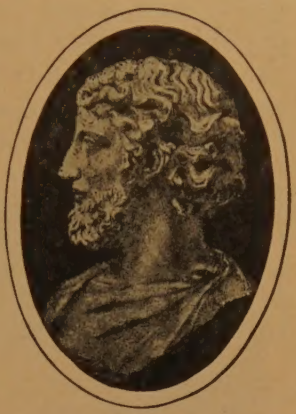
PHIDIAS

THE MENTOR

DEPARTMENT
OF FINE ARTS

SERIAL No. 74

MENTOR GRAVURES
PERICLES · THE THREE FATES
THE DISCUS THROWER
·HERMES
VENUS OF MELOS
THE WINGED VICTORY OF
SAMOTHRACE



PRAXITELES

WERE the Greeks as beautiful as their sculpture?" is a question often asked. Were their women all Aphrodites (af-ro-dy'-tee) and Heras (hee'-ra), their men all godlike? No, surely not; for there was Socrates! And close upon him Xantippe! One might as well claim that all Englishwomen were of regal grace because Reynolds and Gainsborough painted them that way. However perfect the physical development of the Greek, he certainly never looked just like his statue. All good sculpture is more or less conventional and arbitrary, and never were these conventions more pronounced or better understood than in the great period of Greek art. That was one of its claims to greatness.

The statue of a victorious athlete did not pretend to be a "likeness." Portraiture in general had no such vogue in Greece as it had in Rome, or even in early Egyptian art. Apparently the suggestion was all that was desired, except in the case of so pronounced a grotesque as Socrates, where the sculptor gave himself unwonted license. No, they were not all beautiful; for we are told that the greatest among them, the peerless leader who guided thought and achievement in all the generous paths of citizenship, Pericles himself, was said to have an "onion head," and permitted no artist to picture him without his protecting helmet.

The bust of Pericles in the Metropolitan Museum illustrates well the dignity and aloofness of Greek portraiture. There is nothing of the startling intimacy of a work of the fifteenth century, and one looks in vain for the insistent individuality of a Houdon's "Voltaire," a Saint-Gaudens' "Sherman"; but what simplicity and repose are in this treatment! How it tones in with its surroundings and belongs to

that glorious golden age of Greece! This is the man who willed Athens great, who made the Parthenon and the Erectheum (ee-rek-thee′-um) possible, Phidias' friend and the companion of Sophocles and Euripides. Would you want to bring him closer, to study his little peculiarities, as we do our friend Socrates of the snub nose, or flat-faced, heavy-jawed Lorenzo de' Medici (med′-e-chee)? The noble generalization of this portrait is a fit tribute of reverence to Athens' greatest citizen.

PERICLES
In the Metropolitan Museum, New York City

THE FATES

The Greek temple was very simple in design,—just a big stone box, called the cella, with a porch running entirely round it. The extended roof was supported by great columns, forming majestic colonnades. The two "gable ends" of the building were filled with sculptures, illustrating, in the case of the Parthenon, two great events in the life of Athena, the patron deity of the Athenians, in whose honor this magnificent edifice was built. The western pediment contained the pictured story of Athena's contest with Poseidon (po-sy′-don) for supremacy in Attica. It must have been a glorious work of sculpture; but only a few fragments remain to tell the tale and set us guessing as to how they were arranged.

Of the eastern pediment we have a better notion, since a number of the figures are in fairly good condition. They are treasured in the British Museum as things that are priceless. The subject of the composition was the Birth of Athena. It was a miraculous birth, even as things went on Mount Olympus, where they were accustomed to very strange doings. Just how the fabled appearance of Athena from her mighty father's cloven skull was depicted we do not know, since the central part of the great composition has been lost for a thousand years; but we may be sure that there was nothing grotesque nor painful in the representation: the sculptor doubtless chose well his moment. The assembled divinities were shown grouped round the wonderful daughter of Zeus (zeoos); the messengers of the gods hasten in each direction to convey the great tidings to earth. One fairly feels the great news making its way through the assembly.

This is beautifully shown in these three nameless figures which we call "The Fates." The one which is detached has heard the voice and turns, "one foot drawn back as though she were about to spring from her seat; then the more passive sitting figure, already disturbed, though dazed and unconscious from what source comes her awakening; and finally a reclining figure leaning upon the bosom of the last, and wrapped in a slumber which is the most perfect embodiment of languorous repose known in all art. She rests as one who dreams of heaven. Even the messenger of the gods may well forbear to disturb such a repose. The saying of the great sculptor, Canova, that all other statues are stone, but these are flesh and blood, only feebly expresses his enthusiasm for this incomparable group, which must beyond doubt be accorded first place among the sculptures of the world."

The preceding quotation is from Professor Powers' "The Message of Greek Art," which contains the finest description and estimate of these sculptures to be found anywhere.

The beauty of "The Fates" is apparent to every eye; yet study constantly reveals new charms. The drapery is marvelous in its flow and

THE PARTHENON, ATHENS

The Parthenon was erected on the Acropolis at Athens by the ancient Greeks as a temple to their goddess Athena. It was on the pediment of this building that the statue of the "Three Fates" stood

subtle blending of light and shade, offering happy effects for all distances. These glorious forms "carry" like posters, yet reward the nearest scrutiny. To know the sculpture of the Parthenon is like knowing the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel: it is a liberal education, and throws light upon anything else that one may study.

FAUN. AFTER PRAXITELES
In the Vatican, Rome

THE DISCUS THROWER OF MYRON

About ninety miles from Athens was another city of importance with its own school of sculpture,—the ancient capital, Argos. Here Phidias had studied; but the revolution which he wrought in Attic art never touched the home of his youth. All their lives long his colleagues Myron and Polycletus (pol-i-klee′-tus) modeled their athletes according to the old Argive tradition. They preferred the bronze, as the Athenians instinctively turned to the marble.

Of their great works not a fragment remains to us in the original form; but, as in so many other cases, the Roman taste for copies has preserved for us the semblance of a few figures. Of the art of Myron we have two faint echoes,—a Marsyas (mahr′-si-as) in the Lateran Museum of Rome (wrongly restored as a dancing satyr), and the famous Discobolus (dis-kob′-o-lus) or "Discus Thrower," of which there are many variants in the museums of Europe.

The original Discobolus was evidently a memorial to a victorious athlete, perhaps a hero of the Olympic games. The face is not very personal,—they were not making precise portraits just then,—but the action of the figure is as wonderful as its anatomy. It has been said of this work that it might better be called the "Throwing of the Discus"; for it is the action much more than the man which claims our attention. The figure has something of the energy of a tight-coiled spring just ready to go off.

The artist has chosen the moment of rest that precedes the throw (any boy who has thrown quoits or horseshoes behind the barn will recognize the swing of the figure), and every muscle of the splendid body is strained to the utmost. Such figures the Greek sculptor saw every day, and knew by heart. Their public knew them also, and appreciated such a rendering as this. Is it strange that in these favoring circumstances

the ancient sculptors attained a skill which seems to be forbidden us? Our knowledge of the human form is more or less surreptitious, at any rate but fragmentary, and there are few who know enough about it to understand the modern sculptor's efforts. The time we live in has its own subjects capable of expression in sculpture; but they are very far removed from the favorite themes of Myron and Polycletus.

THE HERMES OF PRAXITELES

Phidias and Polycletus, the great sculptors of the fifth century B. C., were succeeded by Praxiteles (praks-it'-e-leez) and Scopas. The growing tendency toward refinement and perfection of skill is illustrated in their work. Praxiteles chooses subjects very different from those which delighted Phidias. The days of monumental grandeur are past. The later man represents the gods, to be sure; but he selects the subordinate, more human divinities, and pictures them with a less reverent touch.

There is an air of easy familiarity in his approach. His first object seems to be the expression of geniality and grace. Only one original from his hand remains; but we trace his style in many copies and adaptations. We know that he was celebrated for his statues of Aphrodite and Eros (ee'-ros). Indeed, it has been said of him that "whenever he put his chisel to the stone the little god of love was peeping over his shoulder."

Pausanias (paw-say'-ni-as), who traveled in Greece in the second century A. D., tells us that he saw in the Hera Temple at Olympia "a Hermes of stone carrying the young Dionysus (dy-o-ny'-sus); it was made by Praxiteles." In 1877 a party of German archeologists made a careful survey and did much excavating at Olympia. They revealed the foundations of the two principal temples, but found few remains of value. The sacred city had too long been a shining mark for Roman robbers. The students were preparing to leave, somewhat disappointed at their small harvest, when one of their number proposed to turn a few more shovels of dirt within the inclosure of the Hera Temple.

APOLLO BELVEDERE
In the Vatican, Rome

Scarcely had they begun when the spade struck a stone, which soon proved to be a statue. And such a statue! With the greatest care it was freed from the soil which had been its bed and protection through so many centuries, and gradually its beautiful form emerged to daylight. No doubt

STATUES FROM THE PARTHENON PEDIMENT

Theseus or Dionysus Persephone and Demeter Iris

these happy scholars were familiar with the passage in Pausanias, and recognized the figure at once; though it must have seemed too good to be true. At any rate, they appreciated the noble workmanship of the figure (there is nothing finer in existence), and we can imagine that there was a great deal of excited German spoken around there that May afternoon.

The legs and arms were broken; but the body and head were intact—and here at last was a Greek statue with its nose in good order! As fortune would have it, they even found the baby Dionysus later, used as a stone in the building of a wall. Thus the Hermes stands today almost complete in the little museum of Olympia. He leans comfortably upon a high stump over which he has thrown his mantle, and seems to be looking with gentle, dreamy eyes at the funny baby perched upon his left arm. The grace of the poise, the firm yet softly rounded forms, the combination of strength and gentleness so well shown in both the subject and the treatment, were a new revelation to the world. Here at last was an original directly from the hands of the great master! It was as fine as men had dreamed. If this was one of the minor works of Praxiteles, what must have been the beauty of his more celebrated achievements!

THE WINGED VICTORY

The famous Winged Victory was found in 1863 on the island of Samothrace in the North Ægean (ee-jee'-an) Sea.

It is now one of the greatest treasures of the Louvre, where it is admirably placed at the head of a great stairway. Poised there upon its original pedestal, a stone prow of a vessel, it seems to float in the air. Few statues appeal so strongly to one's imagination: it makes the old heroic days real once more. It may be of interest to know that when it was found the figure and wings were in one hundred and eighteen pieces,

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Victory | The Three Fates | Selene in Chariot (Fragment)

all of which had, of course, to be carefully fitted and fastened together.

Although we do not know who made this glorious Nike (ny′-kee), we are fortunate in being able to learn something about her. We read that soon after the death of Alexander there was in Macedonia a powerful general named Demetrius (de-mee′-tri-us) Poliorcetes, and that in the year 306 B. C. he engaged in a great naval battle with an Egyptian fleet. Fortunately for us and for the cause of art, he was victorious, and sent the foreign invader about his business. Demetrius became king of Macedonia, and, as was the custom of his time and country, provided a votive offering to be erected in the sacred isle of Samothrace. His very appropriate choice was this splendid statue of Victory. A coin of his reign shows the figure upon the prow of a vessel, with wings extended and trumpet in hand. Unfortunately the arms, the trumpet, and even the head are lost; but the statue is still triumphant.

You can imagine the illusion of the plunging vessel with this superb creature lightly poised upon its prow. There are rush and impetuosity in her every line. The eye wanders with delight over the sweeping folds of the flying drapery, following them round the graceful figure. Behind, the garment is blown out into great fluttering masses of singular beauty and variety. There is everywhere that indescribable play of light and shade which sculptors persist in calling "color"; yet it is without harshness or monotony. Over the bosom and waist the drapery is thin and pressed close to the body, allowing the noble form to show through. No feeble little sister she, squeezed up tight in a corset! How she would pity our deformed young women, with their bent ribs and starved lungs! Like the Venus of Melos (mee′-los), her beauty is largely that of exuberant health, of perfect adequacy. It is a figure worthy of a goddess.

VENUS OF MELOS

CUPID
In the museum at Rome

In the presence of the Venus of Melos one feels a nobility and gracious dignity which were rare even in the greatest periods of art. Many consider this majestic figure the most beautiful of all statues, and it is hard to realize that it was not of the time of Phidias, but a product of the decadence, dating probably from about 100 B. C. Certainly its unknown sculptor was of heroic lineage and worked in the spirit of the mighty ones of the fifth century B. C.

The queenly figure stands with the weight on the right leg, the left knee bent, and the foot advanced. The lower limbs are covered with a vague drapery; the glorious torso, simple and massive, is quite uncovered. The head is in perfect preservation,—one of the few that have survived without scar the attacks of time, the war of the centuries. Its poise and expression put to shame all the Roman copies of great works that we are acquainted with. The features are models for the sculptors of all time,—firm, gracious, mellow, they epitomize sculpture at its best. The far-away look with its hint of illimitable vision is combined with an expression of conscious well-being, of genial adequacy raised to superhuman power.

THE MARSYAS OF MYRON
In the Lateran Museum, Rome

The arms alone are lacking—and what a world of study and conjecture their absence has occasioned! The proposed restorations are numberless; but none is quite satisfactory. The question constantly recurs, Could the radiant one have been as beautiful when complete as she is now in her magnificent mutilation? Her present state compels every spectator to use his imagination — consciously or otherwise—to complete the figure. He does his part, becoming a stockholder, as it were, and at once begins to draw dividends of pleasure. This is the way that all works of art should be

VICTORY ADJUSTING HER SANDAL

NIOBE (Ny'-o-bee)
In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

enjoyed; but the sculptor who can suggest rather than "tell it all" is rare. The device of breaking off limbs would hardly suffice in every case, although it has been employed quite frequently by Rodin and his followers.

But, despite all the protests of insurgent moderns, the final test of a work of art is Beauty. Judged by this standard, where are the strenuous revolutionaries of today in competition with the unknown carvers of the Venus of Melos and the Victory of Samothrace? There is not a man living who can even conceive such beauty as we find in these great works of the past, much less bring it to visible realization.

There is no reason for discouragement: we of a barbaric race are slowly working out our salvation. But let us not forget that between the exalted ideals of the Greeks and the tawdry symbols which serve us in place of ideals there is an unspeakable distance. It is a long and arduous journey that we are engaged upon; but it ends in the stars.

A review of the world's history suggests another thought. The destruction of priceless relics of the past forces upon us the conviction that the world's heritage of beauty is ours by a most slender and uncertain hold. A turn in the fortunes of nations, as one ancient race advanced victoriously upon another, and the masterpieces of the conquered were largely destroyed. It is the story of the centuries, shocking and futile in its repetition. Magnificent libraries, with their unique treasures of manuscripts and illuminations, the product of thousands of gentle lives, have, like the library of Alexandria, mourned throughout the ages by all civilization, been completely blotted from the earth, Splendid structures, the flower of classic and of Gothic art and their superb final expres-

THE VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE
In the Louvre, Paris

sion—edifices rich in historical associations beyond anything that the mind can grasp, are today moldering ruins or a mere memory. What if the Vatican or the Louvre had been destroyed, the British Museum with its Elgin marbles or the art collections of Munich or Dresden? Of the famous master-pieces of ancient art, eulogized by the authors of antiquity, not one example remains. Thanks to the Roman copies so prodigally reproduced for palaces and villas we have some notion of these supreme efforts; but they come to us as faint and often distorted echoes of inspired ideals. Our chief treasures are, like the two glorious marbles of the Louvre, minor works, unsung in their day and by sculptors unrecorded, which have happened to slip through the meshes of the ravaging years to our own time. When we realize that the great majority of man's high achievements and the finest, have been destroyed in the course of the world's wars, we can understand why the race advances so slowly.

Ideals of beauty—how we need them! How inferior is the human kind without them! Out of the general destruction the cruel centuries have tossed us a few mutilated fragments upon which to rebuild our new heaven and new earth. The world contains nothing more precious.

DAUGHTERS FROM THE NIOBE GROUP
In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

HISTORY OF SCULPTURE
By Dr. Wilhelm Lübke.
An interesting and authoritative work.

HISTORY OF SCULPTURE
By Allan Marquand and Arthur L. Frothingham.

THE MESSAGE OF GREEK SCULPTURE
By H. H. Powers.

A HISTORY OF GREEK SCULPTURE
By A. S. Murray.
Highly recommended for a study of Grecian sculpture.

A HANDBOOK OF GREEK SCULPTURE
By E. A. Gardner.
An excellent book for beginners.

HISTORY OF ART IN PRIMITIVE GREECE
By Perrot and Chipiez.

SCULPTURES OF THE PARTHENON
By A. S. Murray.

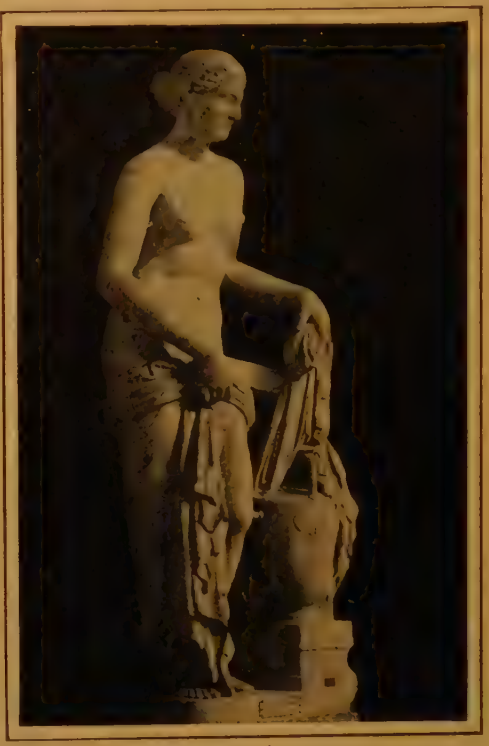
ESSAYS ON THE ART OF PHIDIAS
By Waldstein.
Deals with the work of the great Greek master in a scholarly manner.

HANDBOOK OF GREEK ARCHÆOLOGY
By A. S. Murray.

Ancient Greece had to rely chiefly upon limestone and marble for its sculpture. The country was rich in marble. Athens had quarries at her very door, and there was beautiful marble in Laconia and Bœotia, and in the Greek islands. Therefore, although rough stone (poros or tufa) was occasionally used, the great masterpieces of Grecian sculpture were marble.

★ ★ ★

Referring to the technique of sculpture in Greece, Professors Marquand and Frothingham in their "History of Sculpture" give the following information: All Greek sculpture up until about 350 B. C. was freehand carving. "The instruments used were a saw to prepare the rough stone block, sharp-pointed punches to give the first vague form, square and curved edged and claw chisels to define the surfaces, and a drill for the deep cutting of the drapery. A rod was sometimes fastened upon the front, so that the sculptor might more easily preserve the balance of the two sides of his statue. The most famous sculptors did not hesitate to build up their statues from several pieces of marble, or to leave portions of the original mass as supports."



THE VENUS OF CNIDUS
In the Vatican, Rome.

★ ★ ★

Compare these methods and instruments with the sculptors of today. Modern sculptors do very little to the marble with their own hands. They leave the stone cutting to artisans. The sculptor today models his statue in clay, usually in small size first, as a sketch. Then the subject is modelled carefully and completely in larger size in clay. This is the artist's finished work. From this a mould is made and the statue is cast in plaster. Artisan stone cutters then copy this cast model in the marble, using what is known in the studios as a "pointing machine." This is a very ingenious device, consisting of an arm that extends from the model to the stone, and that indicates just how far, at each point, the artisan is to cut into the stone. When this cutting is done the statue is there, but rough finished. The sculptor may then go over the work and finish it with the touches that refine it and that give it the expression he desires.

In the final treatment of Greek statues, the figure was rendered more life-like by being rubbed down with oil and molten wax. Then it was colored and gilded. "Statues that were of rough porous stone were first covered with a thin layer of stucco, with which the color was mixed or on which it was laid. In the case of marble, this stucco covering was unnecessary. In crude examples brilliant color was applied, generally in broad masses, but in the finer works color was more specifically applied for the emphasis of details. Gilding for marble statuary was applied to details, as upon the wings of the Eros of Praxiteles or the hair of the Venus de' Medici. Other means were also employed to give color to sculpture, as for example the use of bronze for the weapons." In Greece statues were not considered finished until polished and colored. And this was true likewise of carving in relief on stone. In all forms of sculpture the finished work was in color.

THE DISCUS THROWER

"THE DISCUS THROWER," a fine example of Greek sculpture, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Grecian Masterpieces."

THE DISCUS THROWER

Monograph Number One in The Mentor Reading Course

ONE of the most spectacular events in the Olympic games is the throwing of the discus, the ancient sport that the revival of the Olympiad has brought back to athletics. These games gave to the sculptors of Greece excellent opportunities for studying the human body. Myron, the sculptor who chiseled this statue, came from one of the frontier towns of Greece; but apart from this and several other statues little is known of his work.

At Olympia the principal building was the Temple of Zeus, in whose honor the games were held. Besides this there was the gymnasium, the hippodrome, and the stadium. As the town was very small, visitors camped in tents on the nearby plain. The scene must have resembled the encampment of an army.

The games in Grecian times had a religious and a commercial meaning, which gave them added importance. Religious ceremonies preceded the games, and merchants and traders took advantage of the great gathering for displaying their wares. Here as at no other time could representatives of all the districts of Greece be reached.

The events were much the same as today: the chariot racing is one of the few that have entirely disappeared.

The name of the winner of the games and the city from which he came having been announced by a herald, a crown of wild olive was placed on his head, a banquet was held, and the winner returned to his city in triumph. The day of his return was usually made a holiday, and honors were heaped upon the victor by the different cities through which he passed. Statues of the victor were frequently erected. Perhaps this statue is that of one of these winners.

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"THE THREE FATES," from the pediment of the Parthenon, which stood on the Acropolis at Athens, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Grecian Masterpieces."

THE THREE FATES

Monograph Number Two in The Mentor Reading Course

THE statue of "The Three Fates" forms part of the famous Elgin marbles. Lord Elgin was a Scottish nobleman, and in 1799 was appointed envoy to Constantinople. When serving in this position he secured permission to make investigations on the Acropolis at Athens, which had fallen into decay. He was even authorized to remove stones having inscriptions upon them. On this pretext all the sculptures of value that could be removed were taken from the Parthenon, boxed, and shipped to England. Succeeding events justified Lord Elgin's action, as in later years the Parthenon was used by the Turks for the storage of powder, which in some way exploded and blew the greater part of the building to pieces. Lord Elgin's work saved these precious sculptures to posterity.

The 200 cases filled with heavy marble made several shiploads, and one of the ships foundered on the way; but divers later recovered its cargo. Even though the first shipments were made in 1803, the last lot of eighty cases did not reach England until 1812.

The reception that these marvelous groups received in England was most inhospitable. When returning, Lord Elgin had been taken prisoner by the French. From prison he wrote offering his collection to the British government; but no action was taken. After three years he was released, and on reaching England found the art critics busy trying to prove that these sculptures were not good art after all. They hadn't seen them yet; but even when they were placed on exhibition they maintained their first criticism. Lord Elgin was attacked as being a despoiler of temples, a vandal whose aim was the destruction of the monuments of beautiful Greece.

But there were some that recognized the value of these wonderful stones. The Bavarian and French governments tried to purchase them. When it was found that other governments wanted them so badly that they must be worth keeping, Parliament after much delay decided to pay Lord Elgin $155,000 for the entire collection. They were placed in the British Museum, and there they can be seen now, prized as treasures of great worth, beautiful beyond description.

"The Three Fates" was one of the greatest of the pediments of the Parthenon, the great temple on the Acropolis. The pediment of a building is the triangular space above the door. This entire space was filled with statues or groups of statues. Although this group is called "The Three Fates," it is merely a guess that this is what the three figures were intended to represent. They are beautiful, whatever may have been the intention. They were doubtless the work of Phidias or some of the men working directly under him. He also made the colossal figure of Athena, of gold and ivory, which stood in the Parthenon.

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"HERMES," the masterpiece modeled by the sculptor Praxiteles, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Grecian Masterpieces."

HERMES

Monograph Number Three in The Mentor Reading Course

WHY do so many of the Greek statues lack a hand or an arm or one or both feet? Seldom is a perfect one to be seen, and then the work is so poor that it would seem as if Time had not thought it worth while to injure it.

Everyone knows that statues are usually made of marble. It seems strong enough to withstand even hard usage. So it is. But when a city is destroyed its very weight is against its remaining unbroken if moved from its base. Being too heavy to be removed, despoilers of Grecian cities satisfied themselves with pulling them to the ground, letting the fall do the damage.

Another enemy of marble was the lime burner; for by burning marble lime can be secured. A sledge could easily break the arms and legs; but the body and head did not yield so easily, and anyway they were probably too large for the lime kiln. So the lime burner contented himself with collecting fragments broken off by the fall and such other pieces as could be easily knocked off. Thus what is left for us centuries later when a statue is discovered is but the battered remnant of a once beautiful work.

It is hardly probable that such a course of events accounts for the condition of the statue "Hermes"; for it was found on the exact spot a Greek writer had seen it when he wrote a perfect description of it. Compared with other statues, it is in remarkably good condition.

The story of Hermes and the Infant Dionysus is one of the most famous of Greek legends. Dionysus was the son of Semele, a beautiful girl of the city of Thebes, who was loved by Zeus the King of the Greek gods, who took on human form in wooing her. Semele asked Zeus to reveal himself to her in his chariot of lightning. He reluctantly consented, and Semele, overcome with fright, was unable to escape, being devoured by the flames; but Zeus rescued her son and gave him to Hermes, the messenger of the gods, to be taken to Semele's sister. In order to deceive the father, Dionysus was brought up as a girl.

Evidently Praxiteles has represented in this statue Hermes holding the child Dionysus. The statue is one of the most precious in the world, and is one of the very few original works of Greek sculptors that have come down to us. Although it was copied again and again, none of the copies approach the original beauty of its form. All Greek writers from the time it was made have praised it.

One day German excavators at Olympia discovered it, seventeen centuries after it was buried. It was a great find for art. By the aid of this statue it has been possible to recognise several other of Praxiteles' works; so that he is now no longer merely one of the many sculptors that the writers of Greece extolled: modern criticism can confirm the judgment of the ancients. We do not know where or when he died; though he was born at Athens.

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VENUS OF MELOS

"THE VENUS OF MELOS," which is one of the best known and most famous statues in the world, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Grecian Masterpieces."

THE VENUS OF MELOS

Monograph Number Four in The Mentor Reading Course

HOW near the statue of Venus of Melos came to being burned into lime we shall probably never know; but near the place where it was found are the remains of an old lime kiln, and marble makes splendid lime. Early in 1820 on the little volcanic island of Melos several pieces of a statue were found by a peasant. Later on, more of the statue was discovered, and its beauty at once attracted the attention of some French officers.

Greece was at that time in the possession of Turkey. The Turkish officials could be bribed to permit excavations; but when anything particularly beautiful was unearthed the officials were not inclined to stay bribed and would not permit removals. This often led to hasty work, and consequently parts of valuable statues were sometimes left behind.

The French officers tried to buy the statue. In the meantime a Greek priest had agreed to purchase it from the town that claimed its ownership; although he had not paid for it. So, when the French consul arrived on the scene and offered $150 cash for it, the Venus of Melos became French property.

When the pieces were put together at Paris the work was at once recognized to be a masterpiece. It was presented to the French king Louis XVIII. The name of the sculptor was on a fragment that seemed to fit into the base; but as he was unknown it seemed more appropriate to make the gift of this magnificent statue as the work of one of the greatest of Greek sculptors. So the fragment was destroyed and the name of the sculptor lost forever. The king presented the statue to the Louvre, the national museum, and there in a room of her own Venus takes her place as one of the greatest art treasures ever known.

It has always been a delight to the imaginative to try to discover what position the arms occupied. The discoverers found near the statue an upper arm and a hand holding an apple; but they were destroyed.

The reproduction of the Venus of Melos is so easy that it has become perhaps the most widely advertised statue in the world, and as no one questions its supreme beauty it will probably continue to be considered the most famous of Greek productions.

When a siege of Paris seemed imminent, this beautiful work of art was taken underground and placed in a steel cell to prevent its destruction.

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WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE

"THE WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE," which is the admiration of all who love art and sculpture, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure picture illustrating "Grecian Masterpieces."

THE WINGED VICTORY OF SAMOTHRACE

Monograph Number Five in The Mentor Reading Course

WHEN the "Victory of Samothrace" was found it had been broken into two hundred fragments. Skilled workers fitted them into their proper places, and this famous statue is the result. Without head, without arms, it still commands, by its wonderful expression of movement, the admiration of all who love the art of sculpture.

A visitor to Paris makes his way usually first of all to the Louvre, a storehouse of treasures that have been accumulated by the French nation. The first thing the visitor sees at the head of the stairway is the "Victory." She looks as though she had at that instant come sailing down from the sky and alighted on her pedestal. No more appropriate setting for the statue could have been found. No other figure could so well have filled the space. It remains just where it was placed in 1896, on the occasion of the visit of the czar to Paris.

It is characteristic of all that is best in Greek sculpture. No matter how scarred or broken they may be, the fragments remaining are full of beauty. The "Victory" takes her popular name from a little island in the Ægean Sea. Here in 1863 the French vice consul collected the fragments that make the statue. When they were put together it was soon recognized as a statue of "Nike," which is the Greek word for victory.

In the reconstruction of this statue old coins gave many important hints. The goddess is standing on the prow of a vessel, and on the coins we see one of the missing arms holding a flag or a trophy over her shoulder, while with the other a long trumpet was held to her lips. It is thought that this is the very statue set up to commemorate the victory of the Greeks over Ptolemy, in which he lost 120 ships. Because similar figures were stamped on the coins issued after this victory, there is little reason to doubt that the statue was erected as evidence of gratitude.

The draperies around the "Victory" are characteristic of all Greek statues. While in the warm climate of that part of Europe little clothing was needed, yet the point of view of the Greeks should be understood to appreciate the scantiness of drapery at that time. To this people beauty of the body was equivalent to beauty of character. There was therefore no reason for concealing that which they considered beautiful. To the modern eye the point of view is entirely different; but it is one of the greatest handicaps of modern sculpture that modern dress has lost the grace and beauty and simplicity of Grecian times.

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PERICLES

"PERICLES," this copy of which is now in possession of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, is the subject of one of the intaglio-gravure pictures illustrating "Grecian Masterpieces."

PERICLES

Monograph Number Six in The Mentor Reading Course

THERE was a sort of shorthand used in Greek art. For example, a pillar on a painted vase would have been understood by the Greeks to imply that the scene on that vase was taking place in a temple. Zeus was to be recognized by his eagle, Apollo by his lyre. If the statue became mutilated, and the part bearing the identifying sign lost, it is sometimes difficult to decide just which god is portrayed. The statue becomes merely that of a male or a female figure.

So on the portrait bust of Pericles most would see but the head of a man wearing a helmet. But to those having greater knowledge the helmet in its peculiar form is a symbol that the wearer was one of the ten Athenian "generals." Therefore he must have been a man high up in the life of the chief city of Greece; for besides the conduct of military affairs these "generals" had charge of the collection of taxes as well as their management. They also had judicial and other functions which gave them considerable power.

By working backward in this way much of our knowledge of Greek manners and customs, especially in dress and the daily life of the people, has been derived. It is not from the work in sculpture alone, but from the vase paintings, and from the coins as well. And when all this is added to the available written records we are able to form a fairly clear idea of Greece and its people in the height of their power.

Pericles' life was interesting. Statesman he was as well as soldier, orator as well as politician. A patron of the arts, it was in his age and largely at his suggestion that the Acropolis was beautified by the Parthenon and other buildings. For many years he swayed the people of Athens to his way of thinking. Gifted with a rich and mellow voice, his oratory was such as to persuade the crowd to do as he wished it to do. Again and again did he overcome his opponents with his eloquence. To tell of the battles won, and the conflicts in which his valor was shown, of the skill with which he overcame his political rivals, and the sorrows that came upon him in his old age, is to relate only some of the details of the life of this man who was so important in the history of Greece.

If a work of sculpture became famous in ancient times, a copy of it was made, and sometimes many copies. Under the Romans many of the works of the Greeks were copied for use in the Roman villas, because appreciation of Greek art was considered a mark of good taste. It is not to be expected that a copy can be so good as an original; but if the original has been destroyed, a copy is better than nothing at all. So it happens that in many cases the only traces of the famous statues of the Greeks, accounts of which are to be found in the written records, are copies that were made from the originals by the Romans.

That is the case with the bust of Pericles. There are two or three copies of it, and none of them, according to archeologists, gives marks of being the original work. But by their help, making allowance for the slight changes that a copyist might have made, we are able to come to a fair idea of what Pericles looked like, and of the style of the sculptor whose work centuries ago occupied such a prominent place on the Acropolis at Athens.

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